Amendments to the Claims

This listing of the Claims will replace all prior listings and versions of the Claims in the application.

Listing of the Claims

Claim 1 (currently amended): An entrails removal instrument for making a hollow cavity in a body of a bait fish, including:

a. an elongate body having two straight parallel longitudinal sides, said body forming a curved groove between said longitudinal sides;

b. an end section, said end section extending from said elongate body and tapering to a rounded point; and

c. a plurality of tines emanating from a surface of the instrument, wherein at least one tine of said plurality of tines emanates from the end section and is directed away from the rounded point and towards the elongate body, <u>wherein at least one tine of said plurality of tines emanates from a location away from said sides and away from said end section,</u> wherein said entrails removal instrument is adapted to fit into the body of the bait fish and form a cavity when the instrument is inserted into the body, rotated and removed.

Claim 2 (original): The entrails removal instrument of claim 1, wherein said instrument is made from steel.

Claim 3 (original): The entrails removal instrument of claim 1, wherein said instrument is made from stainless steel.

Claim 4 (original): The entrails removal instrument of claim 1, wherein the at least one tine that emanates from the end section includes a plurality of tines.

Claim 5 (original): The entrails removal instrument of claim 1, wherein the plurality of tines emanate from the surface of the instrument at an angle in the range between

about 15 degrees and about 45 degrees.

Claim 6 (original): The entrails removal instrument of claim 1, wherein the end section includes a blade surface at the rounded point.

Claim 7 (original): The entrails removal instrument of claim 1, wherein the instrument is one integral piece.

Claim 8 (original): The entrails removal instrument of claim 1, wherein the bait fish is a herring.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A method of making a plug-cut bait from a bait fish having a head, body, and tail, the method including acts of:

a. cutting the head off the bait fish with a knife while leaving the fish body and tail intact;

b. inserting an entrails removal instrument into the fish body to a position forward of the tail, wherein said entrails removal instrument comprises an elongate instrument body having two straight parallel longitudinal sides, said instrument body forming a curved groove between said longitudinal sides; an end section, said end section extending from said instrument body and tapering to a rounded point; and a plurality of tines emanating from a surface of the instrument, wherein at least one tine of said plurality of tines emanates from the end section and is directed away from the rounded point and towards the elongate body, <u>wherein at least one tine of said plurality of tines emanates from a location away from said sides and away from said end section,</u> wherein said entrails removal instrument is adapted to fit into the body of the bait fish and form a hollow cavity when inserted into the body, rotated and removed;

c. rotating said entrails removal instrument; and

d. removing the entrails removal instrument, whereby [[a]] the viscera of the fish are removed leaving the body and tail intact with a neat hollow cavity.

Claim 10 (currently amended): The method of claim 9, wherein the entrails remover is inserted at least 2 inches into the <u>fish</u> body.

Claim 11 (original): The method of claim 9, further including moving the entrails removal instrument in a lateral motion.

Claim 12 (original): The method of claim 11, wherein the act of rotating includes rotating at least 360°.

Claim 13 (original): The method of claim 12, wherein the method further comprises inserting at least one fishing hook attached to a fishing line into the hollow cavity and pushing it out through the fish body to form a bait.

Claim 14 (original): The method of claim 9, wherein the bait fish is herring.

Claim 15 (original): The method of claim 13, wherein the at least one fishing hook includes a plurality of fishing hooks.

Claim 16 (original):: A plug-cut bait made according to the method of claim 12.

Claim 17 (original): A plug-cut bait made according to the method of claim 13.

Claim 18 (original): A plug-cut bait made according to the method of claim 15.

Claim 19 (original): The plug-cut bait of claim 16, wherein the bait fish is chosen from the group consisting of herring, anchovy, sardine and smelt.

Claim 20 (original): The plug-cut bait of claim 17, wherein the bait fish is chosen from the group consisting of herring, anchovy, sardine and smelt.

Claim 21 (original): The plug-cut bait of claim 18, wherein the bait fish is chosen from the group consisting of herring, anchovy, sardine and smelt.

Claim 22 (new): The instrument of claim 1 wherein said groove comprises a substantially

continuously curved groove.

Claim 23 (new): The instrument of claim 1, wherein said sides comprise straight parallel longitudinal edges of said body and wherein none of said plurality of tines emanate from said edges.

Claim 24 (new): The method of claim 9 wherein said groove comprises a substantially continuously curved groove.

Claim 25 (new): The method of claim 9, wherein said sides comprise straight parallel longitudinal edges of said body and wherein none of said plurality of tines emanate from said edges.

Claim 26 (new): An entrails removal instrument for making a hollow cavity in a body of a bait fish, including:

a. an elongate body having two straight parallel longitudinal sides, said body forming a curved groove between said longitudinal sides, said sides comprising straight parallel longitudinal edges of said body;
b. an end section, said end section extending from said elongate body and tapering to a rounded point; and
c. a plurality of tines emanating from a surface of the instrument, wherein at least one tine of said plurality of tines emanates from the end section and is directed away from the rounded point and towards the elongate body, wherein said entrails removal instrument is adapted to fit into the body of the bait fish and form a cavity when the instrument is inserted into the body, rotated and removed.

Claim 27 (new): A method of making a plug-cut bait from a bait fish having a head, body, and tail, the method including acts of:

a. cutting the head off the bait fish with a knife while leaving the fish body and tail intact;
b. inserting an entrails removal instrument into the fish body to a position forward of the tail, wherein said entrails removal instrument comprises an elongate instrument

body having two straight parallel longitudinal sides, said instrument body forming a curved groove between said longitudinal sides, said sides comprising straight parallel longitudinal edges of said body; an end section, said end section extending from said instrument body and tapering to a rounded point; and a plurality of tines emanating from a surface of the instrument, wherein at least one tine of said plurality of tines emanates from the end section and is directed away from the rounded point and towards the elongate body, wherein said entrails removal instrument is adapted to fit into the body of the bait fish and form a hollow cavity when inserted into the body, rotated and removed;

c. rotating said entrails removal instrument; and

d. removing the entrails removal instrument, whereby the viscera of the fish are removed leaving the body and tail intact with a neat hollow cavity.

Claim 28 (new): The entrails removal instrument of claim 26, wherein all of the tines of said plurality of tines emanate from the end section.

Claims 29 (new): The entrails removal instrument of claim 26, wherein said instrument comprises steel.

Claims 30 (new): The entrails removal instrument of claim 26, wherein said instrument comprises plastic.